

CHAIN GANG



This is a passing game. Balloons are passed overhead, around the sides, and even through the legs. All of these motions are balance disturbing. Working on the Chain Gang is about keeping good balance while being challenged by all kinds of limb movements. It can be easily adapted for different abilities.

Benefits »

- Uses core stability to control balance and changes in momentum.
- Practices changing posture with balance control.
- Allows socializing while balance training.

Set It Up »

Choose several rocks (various objects) for each group to pass. I like balloons, balls, and fuzzy dice. None should be heavy and all should be large enough to pass easily. You will also need two rock boxes for each team's rocks. Place a rock box at the front and back of each line. Each line of participants fills a box of rocks.

How to Do It »

Divide the class into teams of four to eight. Each team forms a straight line. Some teams can sit in chairs and other teams can stand, if that works for your class. Each team is a designated chain gang. They must empty their box of rocks at the front of their line by passing the rocks to the box at the back of their line. To do so they will pass the rocks chain-gang style as you instruct them. Some passes will be overhead, some to the left, some to the right, and so on. Use cues such as these to prep them for the activity:

- What can core stability do for you while passing objects?
- Keep knees how? (soft)
- How are the feet? (offset or wide)
- Torsos are . . . ? (braced: abs in and up, shoulder blades back and down)
- When you reach for an object, how will you do that?
 - Keep your eyes on what? (the prize, the object they want to grab)
 - Keep your abs how? (braced, with arms doing as much of the work as possible)
 - How can you make your arms longer? (Venus de Milo arms)



Hand the first objects to each line. They will start at your signal. Each team must pass all the objects from front to back. Your instructions will tell them how. After all the rocks make it to one end, pass them back to the other end. Here are some ideas to cue passes:

- Pass on the right (everyone passes along the right side of their line).
- Pass on the left (pass the next rock along the left side of the line).
- Pass left, then right (alternate passing left and right from person to person).

- ⦿ Pass right, then left.
- ⦿ Pass overhead (carefully, with trunk braced).
- ⦿ Pass through the legs, only if you think they are able, or overhead.
- ⦿ Pass under, over, under, over.

Give It More Balance »

- ⦿ Have the team sing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* or the *Chain Gang*, if they know it.
- ⦿ Play on a lawn, which is a naturally uneven surface.
- ⦿ Those who are willing can stand on a balance pad.
- ⦿ Use lightweight medicine balls.

Keep It Safe »

Until you are sure how this activity will go, keep it simple. Difference in heights can make it difficult to do overhead passes; the tall person nearly falls over trying to reach the short person. Teams will want to race each other. That's always fun, but do some practice rounds first.

Live It »

Core stability gives balance stability. Trying to keep the core still while moving the limbs helps participants stay balanced and is fun, too.